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**Testimony of Lelah Campo
Associated Builders and Contractors of Connecticut, Inc.**

Before Committee on Labor and Public Employees

**SB 987 – An Act Requiring Community Workforce Agreements for
Construction Projects at the Connecticut State University System**

March 1, 2011

Good afternoon, my name is Lelah Campo and I am the President of the Connecticut Associated Builders and Contractors (CT ABC), a large, state-wide membership association representing a wide variety of members, from some of the largest construction firms in the state, to smaller family-owned firms. Our members want to see our university projects built successfully, on time, under budget and using a fair and open bidding process where both union and non-union contractors and union and non-union workers can compete.

We know that you have many challenges ahead of you as you work to get our state financially on track. We know that pressure is being applied during this confusing time to vote in favor of union-only project labor agreements (PLAs) for our state university projects. As you begin to deliberate the best course of action, it is important to consider grave impact this would have for our local contractors and their employees.

Some claim that a PLA will guarantee that local workers would be employed on these university projects, however, that statement is misleading. Not only have many PLA projects had out of state workers on them, PLA supporters often neglect to point out Project Labor Agreements actually discriminate against local workers that do not belong to a union by shutting them out of the jobsite altogether.

Only a few projects each year go PLA. The vast majority of projects, both private and public, are built open and competitively with both union and non-union craftspeople laboring along side of each other without issue.

The State of Connecticut has in place a qualification process in which contractors must be 'pre-qualified' before they can bid on a public project. This process involves bonding capacity, transparency for political donations, previous work experience and a review of their key staff - all to ensure that the taxpayer money is being spent wisely. The pre-qualification standards prevent any contractors, union or open shop, from obtaining a contract without the proper state certification. The pre-qualification process makes it virtually impossible to have a contract awarded to a contractor without due diligence.

Not only do PLAs shut local workers out from projects, they also cost more. It is simple. When a contractor can't use his workforce they are forced to choose not to bid a project. Less bidders equates to less competition and higher project costs for Connecticut tax payers.

Taking all the facts into account, Connecticut Associated Builders and Contractors firmly believes that PLAs would be detrimental to our University projects by decreasing competition, increasing the costs, and discriminating against local contractors. We strongly oppose SB 987, that would mandate a PLA on these taxpayer projects.

In an era where both union and non-union contractors find themselves in the same boat where one project can mean the difference of a firm making it or closing the doors, we think both types of entities deserve the same opportunity on jobs their tax dollars fund.